

Jerry Brown  
3-1-82

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CAPPS: --We are pursuing this subject because it is dramatically apparent that religious and political currents are running side by side, all mixed together, in the nation and in the world in which we live. Just about a year ago, for instance, Pope John Paul II stood on the site in Hiroshima, where the first atomic bomb fell in 1945, and the Pope pleaded, "Let us make a solemn decision now," he said, "that war will never be tolerated as means of resolving differences. Let us replace war, violence, and hatred with love, confidence, and mutual respect."

Just yesterday, this same Pope, speaking from the Vatican, condemned the great superpowers for meddling in El Salvador, and thus increasing and intensifying the conflict there. And as the Pope was speaking, at a meeting of religious and political leaders in Washington, there was jubilant celebration of the decisiveness played by the American pilots last year, when they shot down the two Libyan planes. The speaker at that rally said, "These pilots knew that their commander-in-chief would support them."

Religion and politics become intermingled at the very time when the society is becoming polarized, with sharper divisions between rich and poor, haves and have-nots, the hungry and the well-fed, the privileged and the disadvantaged, the great superpowers and Third World developing nations. And these complicated and fearful dynamics are being played out virtually everywhere, everywhere one chooses to look, whether in Iran two or three years ago in the

Middle East, in Poland, and not least, within our own country.

We within the university, yes, we here at the University of California at Santa Barbara, are dedicated to creating a climate of open intellectual objectivity, so that the issues which compel and divide the society might be better understood. In so doing, we are declaring our eagerness to commit our resources to a better understanding of the world, intelligent responses, and, if we qualify, to creative and imaginative leadership. For we recognize that the worlds of art, and culture, and literature, and science, and politics, and critical analysis, and religion, and a trained intelligence, and moral values, and athletics, and beauty, and the imagination, these all belong essentially to one world. And we also sense that the institution most micro-cosmic of all of this is the university, and most especially the public university. For the university exists at the crucial crossroads where these currents come together. And we have the responsibility for those who have so generously supported us to make sense of these currents and contribute as effectively as we can to the pursuit and edification of the common good.

This morning I have the very distinct privilege of introducing a man who is among the first in our national leadership to recognize that our nation belongs to the global community. He is a man of vision, a man of zest, of new and creative ideas, and of political passion. And he is committed, most of all, in my judgment, toward

identifying the highest human priorities, not just for some of us, but for all of us, and for all of us together.

Ladies and gentlemen, the governor of the State of California, the Honorable Edmund Brown, Jr.

BROWN: Thank you, thank you very much for that warm welcome. I am not going to talk about Diablo Canyon today, because we don't have to talk about it. It's been stopped rather thoroughly in its place. We are not going to talk about LNG, because that hasn't happened, either. What I am going to talk about today is the subject of this class, which puts me in somewhat of an uncomfortable position, and that's to talk about politics and religion. And at this point in my career, I don't feel particularly good at either.

I spent almost four years studying to be a Jesuit, and I left that and went over to Berkeley, at about the time the student movement was beginning, back in the early sixties, and in my latest incarnation as a politician I find my ratings are rather low, so based on all that, I suppose I shouldn't talk about either politics or religion. But you've asked me to do that, and I'll attempt to do the best I can, and then we'll open it up for questions and see what we find out.

The first observation I want to make about politics and religion is that it is always a rather uncomfortable relationship. And it's one that doesn't apparently fit together very well. There is an institution in California, as there is at the national level, called the Prayer Breakfast, each year. There is the Governor's Prayer

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Breakfast, and there is the President's Prayer Breakfast. Now, I happen to have presided over eight of those occasions, and what I found most interesting is that political reporters found it very uncomfortable to cover anything dealing with religion or prayer. And, as a matter of fact, even those, even while those occasions were quite interesting, and in some instances profound, they really were never transmitted through the media of the, in the sense that normal political news is made. And that ought to be the first clue that politics and religion doesn't generally fit. It also may also reflect the fact that the prayer breakfasts start at seven o'clock in the morning, and neither political reporters nor politicians are ready for that. They usually like to work later in the day and later in the evening. But in one of those prayer breakfasts, a former Regent, now deceased, Gregory Bateson, attempted to define the essence of what religion is all about. And if we are going to talk about religion and politics, we ought to start with some definitions of each. And he gave a couple of examples. One example he started with was a story recounted by an anthropologist, who heard of the problems of a Midwestern Indian tribe that had as its central religious rite the ceremony with the use of peyote, a hallucinogenic substance. Which violated the laws of that particular state. And the question arose whether or not the freedom of religion under the First Amendment protected this Indian tribe

in the exercise of its most central rite, namely the ingesting of peyote in their religious ceremonies. And so this anthropologist decided that he could help out this tribe if he were to film this religious rite and so show it to different groups around the state and so build up political support so as to protect this group of Indians from arrest and possibly even have the law changed to allow them to continue with their ancient tradition that has gone on for hundreds of years, maybe even thousands of years in North America. And so he came to the elders of this Indian tribe, and they sat around in a circle one evening, and they went from each one, and they each asked a question. Should we allow our most sacred rite to be filmed by this anthropologist so that it could then be shown to various groups to build up support and protect our basic institution? And as it went around to each of the members of this group of Indians, they waited, and each one deferred until they got to the eldest member, and they knew that he had to pause and reflect on this, because here he was faced with a basic question. The integrity of the institution of this basic rite, whether to open it up to filmmaking, possibly commercialization, and other changes that would then change the institution itself, or to the survival of that particular practice. And so after thinking about it for a long time, the elder of that group of native Americans said, no, he did not want that anthropologist to film the rite. And when he made that decision, he knew that he was making a choice between survival of that institution of his religion, of the essence of what that group of human beings were all about, and possibly the

survival of what they were doing. It was a question of integrity versus survival. And it is at that point that the religious phenomenon and the religious experience can be found. It is not something that is commercialized, it is not something that is publicized, it is not something that is politicized. It's at that point where a choice must be made between integrity and survival. And if you look at any of the religions, Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Moslem, Hindu, you will find that same outer point that is reached, when matters of religion are discussed. And I think we are not to talk about something that is just a commercial artifact, or some, something, degenerated version of religion, we ought to at least try to get a definition that reaches that level. Because what we are trying to find out is what is the sacred. And we have generally understood that there is a distinction between the secular and the sacred, and that there is a domain for each.

In our own country, we have separated religion from government. We have a First Amendment that attempts to do that. We have a corrolary doctrine that talks about church and state. The Supreme Court has talked about the wall between each. Now, even that wall is often difficult to maintain. I'll give you an example.

Our First Amendment says there shall be no establishment of religion. It also says that each citizen shall be guaranteed the free exercise of religion. Now, consider this case.

A Seventh Day Adventist, whose Sabbath is Friday, is required to work on a given day for a business, and says, "I don't want to work on that day, because my religion

forbids me. The employer then fires that person, and the individual then complains that he has been discriminated because he has been prevented from the free exercise of his religion. The businessman, who is the employer, argues "If I have to exempt only Seventh Day Adventists from working on Friday under the compulsion of law, then that framework of law is establishing religion and protecting it in a very real and legal sense."

Now, the Supreme Court decided, seven to two, on behalf of the employee and said that in that sense, even though there is a clash between the free exercise of religion and the establishment of religion, in this instance, we will protect the free exercise.

The reason I illustrate that point is because the whole subject matter, both theoretically, legally, and politically, is fraught with contradictions and with ambiguity. And the more you push into it, the more you see an interpenetration between the secular and the sacred, between the religious and the political. And the distinction itself, at any given moment, has to be arbitrary. Most cultures, most civilizations, have not created this distinction. Our original ancestors, were our ancestors, most of us anyway, lived in this part of the world, did not separate politics and religion. I think if you were able to go back a few hundred years, maybe before, three or four hundred years, before the Spanish came in, you asked a Chumash Indian, "How do you deal with this problem of politics and religion?" they wouldn't know what you were talking about, because the life, the tribal,

cultural phenomenon which each individual experienced, saw no distinction.

Now, coming back to the origin of our own country, it began with the Pilgrims, Puritans, attempting to escape from the established religion in England, something that they perceived to be suffocating their own individual identities and capacity to worship and to express themselves religiously as they perceived it. So they came to this country, and they established the settlements in the northeastern part of our country. And so we began in religion. And then, over the years, up until 1776 and 1789, when we finally got our Declaration of Independence and then our Constitution, James Madison came along, and he began to separate them. But even in the separation of church and state, there is still this connection.

Now, if you look at a one-dollar bill, you will find on the back of it an image of the back of the great seal of the United States. I don't know if you have a dollar bill, but if you take it out and look at it, you will see a, you will see a pyramid with a seeing eye. And, I don't know whether you have ever wondered what that says, but there's a Latin inscription at the bottom of it, that says, "Novus Ordo Seclorum." Which I will interpret in two ways. Now, one translation might be, "New Order of the Ages," or what we might say in more contemporary terms, "New Age." Or another interpretation given by George Will, a conservative political commentator, "You ain't seen nothin' yet." That symbol, which in itself is a mystical symbol, perhaps of Masonic origin, expresses again this connection between



our government, our national identity, and religion itself. And it focuses on the concept of a new order, a new age, some new way of doing things. It certainly is new to separate politics and religion. It never happened before. It may never happen again. Because to try to divide people up between body and mind, between sacred and secular, in itself is at best a dilemma with great tension. And we're finding that even today.

I want to make a couple of other points. There is a person who has written a very interesting book that, if you haven't got a long enough reading list, I am going to commend it to your attention, by a man named McLaughlin, from the University of Chicago. And it's called Revivals, Reforms, and Reawakenings. And in this book he charts the reawakenings that have occurred in this country. The first one being at the time when the Puritans came to the country, and then about the time we first established our nationhood in the seventeen, late seventeen-hundreds. And there was a great sense of revivalism around the country, and they called that the "Great Awakening." Jonathan Edwards and others are best known for it. And then as you go down through our history before the Civil War, another great awakening, with preachers and tremendous manifestations of spiritual and religious expression. Some critics might call it fanaticism, or excess. But whatever, however you want to look at it, the incontrovertible historical fact is that every forty or fifty years, there has occurred in this nation a great awakening. And that great awakening

in the religious domain has been accompanied by changes and shifts in the political.

The founding of our country, prior to the Civil War, and even in our own century at the time between Hoover and Roosevelt. These were great political shifts. There was one in 1870, that was also accompanied, and you can trace religious awakening with fundamental political shifts.

Now, today some people believe we are in the midst of not only a religious awakening, but a fundamental shift in political values. And that the period we are in is one of discontinuity. It's that gap, it's that space between one age and another, one order and another, one paradigm and another, however the phrases that you wish to group together to point to a fundamental shift that is occurring.

I want to refer to one other discipline to point out what is occurring. There is a theory in economics by a Russian by the name of Kondradiev, that is also mirrored by some other economists in other countries, that holds that every forty to fifty years, there is a great surge of economic activity, and that economic growth occurs in what he called secular waves. And he points not to the ups and downs of the stock market, not to the business cycle that expands and recedes every three to five years, but rather long waves that occupy forty to fifty years. And if you look back on our own history, the last great turning point was the Depression, and then a great expansion for forty, forty-five, fifty years, and we've been in this period of stagnation and recession, and who knows what, over the last ten years. And if you trace it back, as Kondradiev did, you can find

some evidence, although it's controverted, that these waves do in fact occur. So it's very interesting that from a religious, political, and economic perspective human history tends to be characterized by these shifts. And many people believe we are in one today. Now, that doesn't mean it occurs in a week, or a year, or even a decade. It takes time. But it is rather curious that you have in our own time one of the largest churches shifting from the ancient language of Latin to the vernacular language at the very time some of its dropouts are chanting Sanscrit in some new religious expression. And so you have this strange situation where some churches are declining, other churches are expanding, cults abound, and there is both a deepened interest in religious political action as well as internal growth, internal meditation, internal introspection. And so all these indicate that something is stirring, something is awakening.

Now, any time the symbols begin to collapse, become ambiguous, and no longer hold people and grasp people at a deep level, then those symbols are manipulated, their meanings are often twisted, and people can exploit them. So certainly this is a time of false prophets, it's a time of religious exploitation, as well as a time of religious deepening.

The university, of course, draws its origins from the religious impulse, starting from the University of Paris toward the end of the Middle Ages, to Cambridge and Oxford, Yale and Harvard. Originally theology was the

queen of the sciences. Originally universities were primarily divinity schools. And out of that they have evolved into this great secular enterprise in the pursuit of knowledge. And even if we look back to the first book of the Bible itself, we find that the whole matter of religion itself starts with the tree of knowledge and how man relates to that tree of knowledge, or how men and women relate to that tree of knowledge.

And so you are involved in the enterprise and in the institution that is the lineal descendent of an essentially religious institution and experience. Now, what does that add up to today?

The university has divided itself into disciplines and courses and departments, buzz bits of information are transmitted, but is there an over-all pattern? Is there a pattern that connects the various information that you are being entrusted with and that you are learning? Is there some over-all pattern, or is there something that you can tie into the concept of religion as well as knowledge, as well as politics? And where we are today is that those matters are rarely discussed. What we discuss are affirmative action, salary increases, fees, politics, course requirements, grades, jobs, whatever. We have a great sector, supermarket of information, where you are required to gather as much of it as you can so that you can take your blue and gold ribbon and get yourself twice the income if you only had your high-school diploma. And that's somewhat of a debased statement of what it is you are after.

But I think in this university undertaking there is an

idea of the university that transcends that, a pursuit of wisdom, a pursuit that reaches this religious essence.

Now, some people think that religion came and is a corrupted form of magic. The fact is, a book on this, called The Golden Bough, by Frazer, the basic thesis in that book is, religion started with magic. Another version of that might be, is that the Indians, when they did their rain dance, they felt they could actually induce God to make it rain. And that this was some kind of magical incantation. And that's the way it is often described. There's another interpretation of that, which will help me to elucidate what I am trying to say about the university and what I am trying to say about religion and politics.

Another interpretation of what our first people here were trying to do when they had a rain dance was trying to reaffirm their participation in and their membership in the whole ecology of nature. And they were trying to express, not their separation, but their intimate connection with the totality of life itself. And so the rain dance, far from being a manipulation of some anthropomorphic god, was really a deep collective expression of the human membership in the larger ecology of which all living systems find their essence and their sustenance. And in that sense, instead of being a rather shallow, primitive experience, it has a rather deep lesson for the meaning of our own lives, and the connection of the various things that now separate us.

In one of the most powerful passages in the Old Testament, God talks to Job out of the fire, and says something to the

effect, dost thou know when the goats bring forth their young, or can you tell me how it is that the deer can produce their offspring? And that's an interesting comment, because if you think about it, what God is asking Job, Job, do you understand the laws of nature? Do you understand the ecology of which you are a part? Do you understand the rules which you are subject, just like the deer, the wild goats, and all other living systems?

For only about three hundred years, we have separated ourselves in our own minds from the ebb and the flow of natural forces. Religion primarily grew out of this attempt to reconcile man and nature. And so when you ask, what is the connection between religion and politics, first ask yourself what is religion itself, and what is politics?

Politics comes from the Greek concept of the polity, the community, what is general, not what is private, not what separates you from me, but rather, what holds us together? What do we all share in common? That describes citizenship. And citizenship describes politics. Politics are those questions that are of general interest, relates to something called the common good. Therein is a connection between religion and politics, between the sacred and the secular. Both are driving at the larger generalization, the larger concept within which we can see our connection. Community level, the personal level, the national level, the global level, even the cosmic level.

In the age we are in now, we are between points, we are between ages. We are between symbols. People are grasping

for those images and those words that will allow us to express, to discover, to share, and to affirm that basic reality of which we are all a part. We do that in this separated way because of the bitter history of Europe, where millions and millions of people were killed in wars of religion. So we try not to re-create the dark history where people were fighting over papal authority and transubstantiation and consubstantiation and predestination and faith versus good works, and all other manner of ideas that most of the people wouldn't even understand or even care about today. So we don't repeat that mistake. We have exorcised the incubus of religious factionalism. But at the same time, we can't totally abandon the essence of what is human, of what is divine, of what is sacred, because that is the connecting path between what we are as individuals and what we are as a species, and what we are as an ecosystem, biosphere, cosmos.

Now, there are three concepts that, if not changed, will destroy the world.

One of them is the Western idea of the individual. The second is technology. And the third is overpopulation. If both curves, all three curves continue, there is no doubt we are going to blow the world up. Because if you continuously refine military technology, if you continuously increase the population at two to three per cent a year, and if you affirm that the highest good is the individual benefit, you put those three together, and you have utter disaster. So we have to change somewhere.

I don't think we are going to change technology, although

I hope we are going to limit nuclear arms, at least we are going to send a message in November. We are not going to limit population, even though I have done my part, for another fifty years. It will level off at ten billion. Everybody tells me that. So we are going to have to change the idea of individuals. And we have to change the idea of ourself, our identity, and our self-concept. And that's where religion and politics can come together and can rediscover new images of ourselves, ourselves as Western man, as Western civilization, our relationship with the southern hemisphere, the northern hemisphere, the rich and the poor, where we can rediscover a global community of sharing, a community where we transform this mad rush for individual accumulation, based on the quantitative expansion of the individual, to one based on quality, an ethic based on cooperation, an ethic that we understand, that growth can be in terms of wisdom, in sharing and knowledge, and not just in accumulation and exploitation and taking more and more, adding it to the waste stream, and degrading the environment.

And very fortunately, we have examples of that in California. We have, for example, the invention of the microprocessor, which creates a computer a fraction of the size of your fingernail, that once was the size of a room, a large-sized classroom. So we have done is to implode, to complexify human intelligence and program it into a minute amount of material that uses only a fraction of energy, a fractional amount of energy.

Through the information technologies, we are able to transcend the dilemma between growth and no growth, and we are able to expand our knowledge, our capacity to work, our



capacity to share. So we are at an economic, political, religious turning point. We have the tools. We have the tools to minimize the use of energy, to minimize the stress on the environment, the erosion of soil, the degradation of water, the acid rain, the over-denuding of forests, we have those powers, we have those tools. We have the tools to feed every human being on this planet. Those tools exist. What we lack are the ideas, we lack the shared values, we lack the leadership, we lack the coalition. And any religion and any politics that can bring that together and bring it together before the holocaust, not after, for the insects and medflies that will survive us all, anyone who can bring that together is on the cutting edge of that new order of the ages, predicted and prophesied by our own founding and our own ancestors.

And so in any class of politics and religion, the two are separate, but at the same time the two can come together, can join together, to deal first with the specter of nuclear holocaust and this insane buildup of nuclear weapons and their proliferation. That's one thing religion and politics can be done together.

Secondly, the global disparities, we can share the fruits of our own inventions with the five hundred million people whose per-capita income would not even suffice to get you one day in a local hospital in Santa Barbara. We can do that with politics and religion.

And thirdly, politics and religion can find a unity in the ethic of stewardship, the protecting of nature, the building for the future, not stealing from it. Religion began out

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the earth, out of the nature cults, out of the harvest, and it can also now reform itself, reformulate itself, in a protection of our environment, an affirmation of the equity that is necessary for a surviving society, and for a society that grows not with quantity, but with quality, not with things, but with information and with wisdom.

Now, if those concepts, over time, can catch up with those other concepts that are dragging us back, then politics and religion itself, however separate paths they may pursue, may join in some sense and at some level in an affirmation of life, an affirmation of peace, and an affirmation of unity, which is the basis of all human endeavor. Thank you very much.

CAPPS: We are going to take a break now, and the rally will begin in about five or ten minutes, in this room. It is not being held in Storke Plaza. It will be held here. Once again, our gratefulness to the governor for a most stimulating speech. Thank you.

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SIDE II OF TAPE:

NO SOUND ON SIDE II OF TAPE